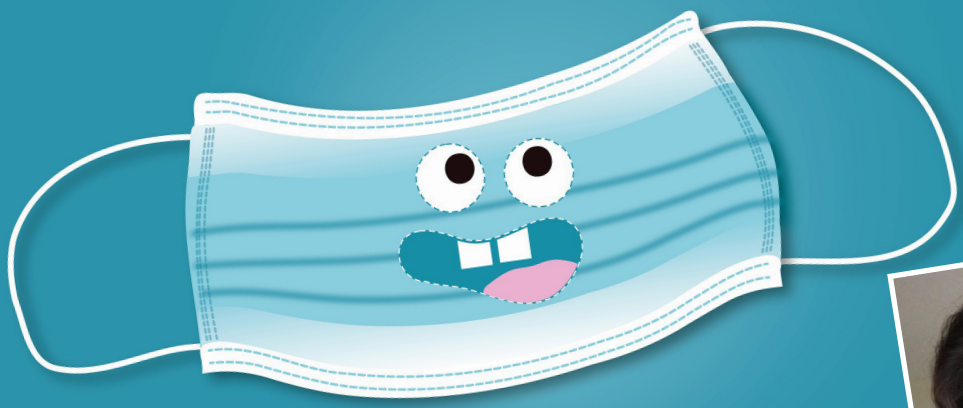
June 5, 2020
Issue #9

MASKING OUR FEELINGS



Guess that Emotion!

How good are you at guessing half-hidden emotions correctly? Time to try on your interpreting skills! Play our game on page 10.

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

shining a light in the dark
Published by the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal* during the Pandemic.

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

LIFTING OTHERS

Now it is June, 12 weeks since we all began sheltering and distancing and quarantining and Zooming. 40 million unemployed. And now days of grief and upheaval and protests. Agonized cries for our culture to wake up to the fear and suffering still being caused by pernicious racism.

Meanwhile, where I am, the azaleas are in bloom, and the rhododendron are bursting. The dog is so shaggy she'll have to be shaved. My family is staying safe, maybe too safe, but we are scaredy-cats, and were spooked by the tales of coronavirus striking all in its path, an equal-opportunity virus. So, we have stayed as far from its path as can be.

I have never seen anything like this. Everything upended. I have a dear friend from Zimbabwe. She has seen everything upended, for forty years. People in Israel and in Palestine have lived with everything in flux, and at risk, for seventy-five years. The people of Lebanon and Syria—decades of turmoil. An earlier generation of Europeans lived through two world wars and a depression. China lived through invasion and war and revolution and famine and cultural revolution. And on and on.

But we, in America, what have we lived through, really? We have been given the profound gift of lives largely removed from tribalism, war, famine, genocide, hyper-inflation, pestilence, and plague. Racism, sexism, homophobia, cruelty, sanctioned violence, economic injustice–these all persist. But the current level of chaos and carnage is new, and ratcheting up, and upsetting.

We in the Ann Arbor region have been so fortunate to be able to live our lives surrounded by people who are conscientious, and mostly thoughtful of others. So much grace has been bestowed upon us. What are the obligations that accompany such good fortune?

I encourage our readers to read the two-page Q+A with Callan Loo, on pages 16 and 17 in this issue, and go to the link provided, to read stories of people facing challenges, and stories of courage.

I am so grateful to Jennifer Carson for her efforts each week to bring forth this lively pandemic Weekly, so we can help to keep the Crazy Wisdom community connected. I take to heart our mission to be a bookstore and a publication about consciousness, and to serve those in our region who are searching in their lives, spiritually and psychologically and holistically and politically. It is wonderful to be part of working to lift up others, in whatever way.

Ruth Schekter and Bill Zirinsky have been the owners of Crazy Wisdom for 31 years. Bill is also the Editorial Director and Publisher of The Crazy Wisdom Journal.

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Please read our parent publication, *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. You can find online archives on our website, crazywisdomjournal.com. *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* has been published three times a year since 1995.

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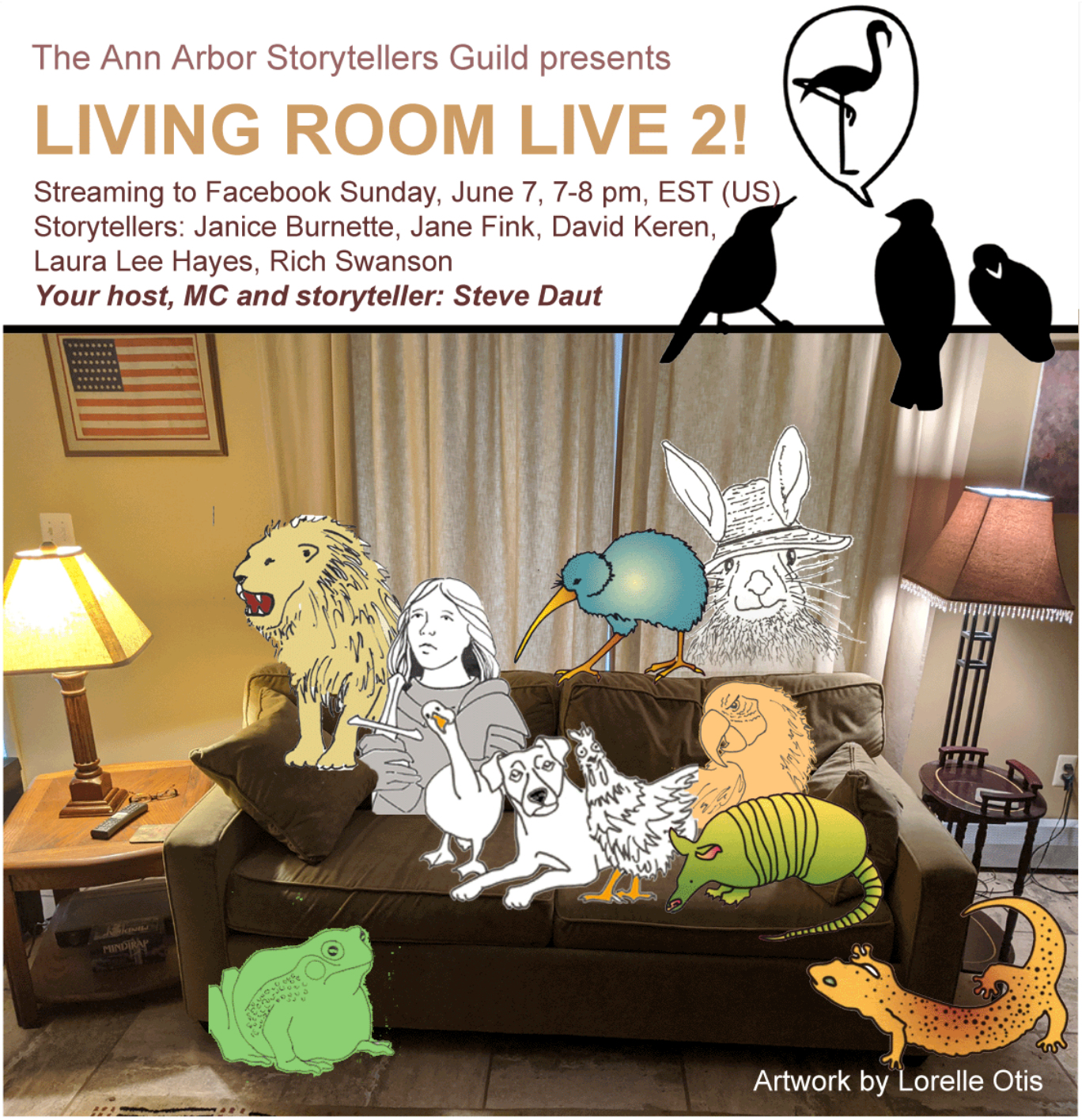
Our cover photo was taken by Jeremy A. Chmie.

Thank you to our contributors for this issue:

Kirsten Mowrey
Gari Stein
Michelle McLemore
Austeen Freeman
Angela Madaras
Carol Karr
Callan Loo
Kenneth M. Thompson
Jennifer Carson
Bill Zirinsky

Because of Covid-19, we didn't publish our usual springtime *Crazy Wisdom Community Community Journal* in mid-April. In the meantime, we thought we'd create a weekly online version—short, and lively, and perhaps a mild distraction for our local and regional readership. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, breathing exercises, favorite places for socially distant walks, news of your dogs, whatever. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.


The Ann Arbor Storytellers Guild presents
LIVING ROOM LIVE 2!
Streaming to Facebook Sunday, June 7, 7-8 pm, EST (US)
Storytellers: Janice Burnette, Jane Fink, David Keren,
Laura Lee Hayes, Rich Swanson
Your host, MC and storyteller: Steve Daut
Artwork by Lorelle Otis

Living Room LIVE!, an online storytelling concert performed by members of the Ann Arbor Storytellers Guild. This is the second event in a spoken word concert series that entertains, informs, and warms your heart. Stories include folk tales, personal stories, tall tales, and everything in between. The concerts are geared toward an adult audience, but are generally family friendly. Live streamed on Facebook through the account of Steve Daut. 7pm Sunday, June 7.

Safe as possible:

Practicing professionally in a CoVid world

By Kirsten Mowrey, LMT, BCTMB

Holistic therapies appeal to clients who want to care for their whole selves, in the least invasive ways, toward their goals of health and well-being. Historically, massage and other bodywork modalities have been one of the safest forms of treatment for all ages. With the advent of SARS-CoV-2 (the scientific name for coronavirus or CoVid-19) into our populations, all healthcare professionals are reviewing their protocols to decrease the likelihood of transmission.

To my mind, this includes anyone who sees a client in a treatment room for an extended period of time: reflexologists, craniosacral therapists, Alexander practitioners, Feldenkrais practitioners, polarity practitioners, and many other therapies. Yet, as a whole, our professions are often neglected in public health initiatives because we are not seen as equivalent to conventional therapies and are often misunderstood or ignored by policy makers.

In talking with colleagues, it is clear that we are all debating, hesitating, and unsure of how to practice in the face of this highly transmissible novel virus.

I do not think we can allow this oversight to continue in the face of this virus. Particularly as states and regions move away from shelter in place orders to more movement, we need guidance about how to protect ourselves, our clients, and our professional standing. To do that, we need information. Reopening is on the horizon. What does reopening mean right now?

In talking with colleagues, it is clear that we are all debating, hesitating, and unsure of how to practice in the face of this highly transmissible novel virus. Many of us are not ready to reopen. What I offer here is some information and resources to help orient us all to the new world we live in. For myself, the more data I have, the better I can make a decision that I can trust and stand firm in when communicating with clients, answering their questions with confidence, and knowing that I am doing the best I can given the conditions.

Healwell.org is a massage therapy group that operates primarily in hospital settings. Their video "Back to Practice Guidelines" is thorough and detailed on points of cleaning your room between clients, setting up your room for frequent sanitizing, and the use of PPE (personal protection equipment) for hands-on therapists. You can find it here. Their recent blog posts discuss topics of interest to any bodywork professional.

Associated Massage & Bodywork Professionals (www.abmp.com): This professional organization did an entire digital issue on CoVid-19 in April, available for free. "The Truth about Covid-19" by Sasha Chaitow, addresses specific questions, as well as walks us through the scientific processes in the wake of a public health crisis all in an informative, reasonable voice.

Ruth Werner, author of *The Massage Therapist's Guide to Pathology*, recorded a YouTube discussion with Diana Thompson and Melanie Hayden titled *A discussion on the potential changes coming due to Covid 19 to the massage/bodywork professions*. You can watch it here. A wide ranging conversation that brings up several points of practicing professionally in current times and modifications necessary. It was filmed on April 20, 2020

For the massage profession, the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) has a list of links for massage therapists about reopening, including guidelines by states that have already reopened. I did not find any original material. This information is accessible to anyone browsing their website, www.amtamassage.org. ABMP created documents, such as paperwork, signage and checklists for practitioners reopening—as far as I can tell, these too, are available to anyone. I viewed the webpages for The Rolf Institute, Feldenkrais, Trager, and Polarity member associations and found no information on them for free, though they may have information for members. I was looking specifically for information on how to practice safely and how the treatment experience needed to change, not for financial or liability information. I also recommend the Journal of the American Medical Association, www.jamanetwork.com. Their coronavirus page offers epidemiological, clinical management, and testing information. I have found it a valuable resource for science-based information as discussion of the virus becomes politicized in the media.

Safe as possible continued

Finally, my disclaimer. As with everything related to this virus, information changes rapidly. This virus is novel, which means we do not know a lot about it: how it mutates, what it does within different populations, how it interacts with specific conditions, what happens over time? Recent information suggests that blood clotting may be an issue post infection, but data is still being gathered. These resources offer ways to make practicing safer, but they do not mean that our places of business are risk-free nor will they eliminate transmission. The resources I have listed above are the best I have found to date, offering science and research based information. I cannot tell you what to do—as Cal Cates writes for Healwell, "this issue is a hot potato, and everyone is trying to not be left holding it, from our professional associations to our government officials. Which leaves it in our hands."

I advise that you learn in small doses. The changes we need to make are a complete overhaul of how we practiced in the past. Don't overwhelm yourself, give yourself time to absorb all that needs to be done, and give yourself time to do it. Then you will be able to manage and communicate with your clients from your center, which is why they come to you for your speciality in the first place.

Kirsten Mowrey, LMT, BCTMB practices a variety of hands-on therapies, working with clients to create mind, body, and soul integration. She can be reached at www.kirstenmowrey.com.

From Our Blog

Now I know my ABC's . . . Is That What It's All About?

By Gari Stein

Infants come into this world pre-wired for music, expecting to move. And that is how they learn. Babies are not born thinking, "I want to learn my numbers, shapes, colors, and ABCs." We know how good music makes us feel, and now the research is bursting with how good it really is for us.

What makes us think also makes us move. We need to get babies out of their containers and onto the floor. Rolling, creeping, crawling, walking, jumping, movement that directly corresponds with the way information travels in the brain: side to side, back to front, up and down (Blaydes-Madigan). The part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that's processing learning (Strick).

The media of the current culture would have our mantra be "make children smarter, faster." With such emphasis on the academics and leave-no-child-behind, children are often left on their behinds, sitting on their social and emotional needs. Children can know their letters upside down, inside out, forward and backward, but if they don't feel good about themselves or have the social competence to relate to their peers, the academics won't serve them well.

So let's get moving, boosting brain power at the same time. Let your children play with their food. It uses several senses and at the same time sends messages to the brain, forming neural pathways. Wave arms in the air crossing the mid-line of the body. This integrates the left and right sides of our brain, which is an important part of coordination and factor in learning to read and write. Singing songs and chanting rhymes uses lots of senses and builds many skills.

Music is one of the only activities that activates and stimulates both sides of the brain impacting language, memory, creativity, imagination, coordination, rhythm, listening, and concentration. Get physical. Gross motor needs to be developed before fine motor can be mastered.

Simply put, movement impacts all developmental domains. Is this too much information to process? Then, forget about it. Just put baby on the floor to observe and explore and then back to your arms to move through different planes. Put on some music, wave scarves, shake maracas, shake-shake-shake, wiggle-wiggle-wiggle, and jump for joy.

Read more about educating our litte ones at home on our website.

PLAY THE MASKING OUR FEELINGS GAME ON PAGE 10!

"You," he said, "are a terribly real thing in a terribly false world, and that, I believe, is why you are in so much pain."

Photo by Jeremy A. Chmie

10/6
"Open your mouth a little wider when you speak."
"Be what you would seem to be – or, if you'd like it put more simply – never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise."

All quotes are from *Alice In Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Photo by Jeremy A. Chmie

Masking our Feelings

By Michelle McLemore

On your way to the grocery market or another enclosed space? Get ready for "Guess that Emotion." It is hard enough to project through the Covid-facemask gear, extremely challenging for those who read lips or are hearing impaired, but now consider we have reduced half of the normal visual cues used to read another's facial expression!

In the check out, customers stand four to six feet away from each other, dutifully on X's and lines, and there is often silence. The isolation of each person is palpable. There is little friendly banter nor heads up looking around. Our very human natures have changed in these weeks. Next, consider how confrontational social media has become. Frequently people are misinterpreting tone and intention in the written word. Now, take those same emotions into the physical realm. Looking around, it is easy to imagine resentment, or annoyance, or even distrust in those around us because our normal hints at emotion are suddenly covered and reserved.

Psychologist Paul Ekman originally proposed there were six universal basic emotions that could be discerned by reading facial expressions. These basics covered happiness, surprise, disgust, fear, anger, and sadness. Later on he would suggest there was commonality in also expressing pride, embarrassment, shame, as well as excitement. All other emotions were conceived of hybrids from these basic core feelings, and as such their physical manifestations were also shared.

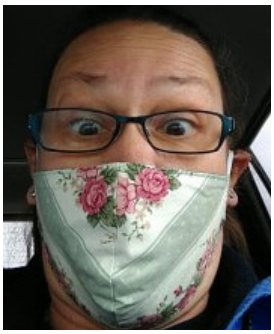
Welcome to 2020. You have only eyes and maybe eyebrows (if they are not hidden by hats or hair) to help you figure out the mood of the check-out clerk or the store patron standing in the way of what you need. How good are you at guessing emotions correctly and deciding how you want to interact with this stranger or neighbor? Time to try your interpreting skills!

For each pair, place your bets on what emotion they were feeling at the time of the photo. Then, check your answers. Some indeed are very close. Maybe try it as a charades version at home with family and youngsters. Given an emotion, can a player express it clearly enough with their covered faces for it to be guessed correctly?

Now more than ever, we need to look each other in the eyes and in so doing, acknowledge what is in our hearts to build a stronger community and stronger future.

A

B



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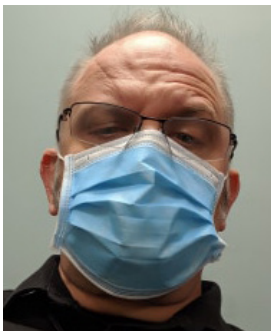
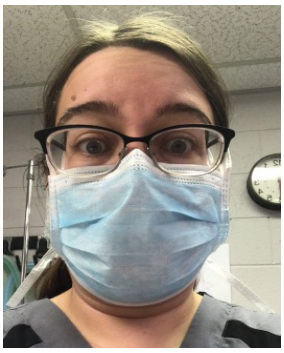


D

E



F

G

H

How'd you do?

Check your answers here!

Answer Key:
A = Happiness
B = Fear
C= Sadness
D= Anger
E = Pride
F = Surprise
G = Excited
H = Disgusted

Crystal of the Week

By Carol Karr

Fluorite often occurs with other common minerals, including Quartz and Calcite, which makes it an excellent healing tool for its overall cleansing and purifying effects. It typically contains green and purple colors, giving it an incredible synergistic energy that heals and rejuvenates the aura. The green cleanses and purifies the heart chakra by aligning your mind with the true desires of the heart. The perfect prescription for a case of existential burnout, the purple colors in the Fluorite crystal stone helps you discover your divine purpose in life. It opens and stimulates the third eye chakra, clearing the way for spiritual expansion.

Yoga
Pose of the Week

Lizard Pose

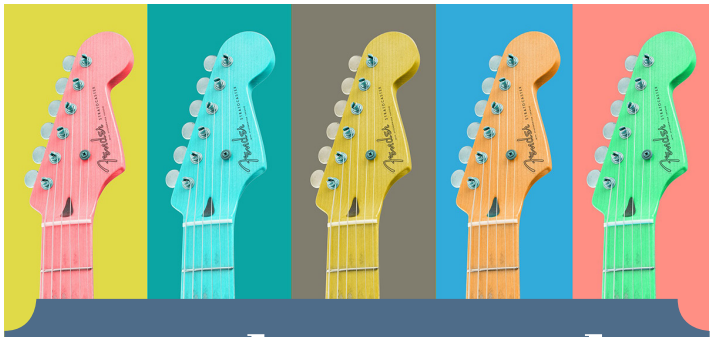
By Austeen Freeman

We always hear about the dreaded Psoas muscle, or the shortening of the hip flexors, from sitting too much. This shortening may lead to pain in the low back, which is one of the highest chronic pain complaints of people in the USA. When I started working with Lizards Pose (Utthan Pristhasana), I was not a fan. It was difficult, I felt stiff, and definitely couldn't get as "deep" into the pose as other students. Over the years this pose has grown on me and I believe has made a significant change in my own low back pain. So, I wanted to share it with you today.

Start on your hands and knees, gently step your right foot forward in between your hands. Then bring both hands to the inside of the front foot. Walk the front foot out to the right, if you're on a mat, walk it out to the edge of the mat. Bring the right knee over the ankle and let the pelvis drop toward the front heel. Walk the back knee out as far back as it feels good. You can also drop to your elbows or stay on your hands. Ta-Da! You are in Lizard Pose. I am a big proponent of listening to your body. Adjust the pose as you deem necessary.

This pose is great for hip extension. When you are in the pose, your primary goal is finding sensation in the back leg. You may feel a stretch on the top of the back leg or even the groin and hamstring of the front. It is also great for releasing tensions of the hip flexors which can wreak all kinds of havoc if tight. Give it a try and develop your own opinion of Lizards Pose!

If you have any questions check out my website at austeenfreeman.com, or follow me on Instagram @austeen_freetobe for courses, classes, and inspiration!



Local Music and Online Concerts!

The Chelsea Library Offers Virtual Music in the Air Concert with Jacopo Giacopuzzi

Submitted by The Chelsea Library

The temporary closure of our library may have suspended in-person programs here, but thanks to the talented Giacopuzzi siblings and a little creativity, the Chelsea District Library will be offering this year's Music in the Air concert virtually. Chelsea favorite Jacopo Giacopuzzi is creating a Chelsea-specific concert experience for us from his home in California, and he has invited his equally talented sister Maddalena to play with him from her home in Italy. We are so pleased to share this unique "global" cultural opportunity with you!

This exclusive video concert performance will be released on Saturday, June 6 at 12pm at www.chelseadistrictlibrary.org/mita. Have a prior commitment? Don't worry! The performance video will remain available to CDL for one month after its release.

I hope you can join us on June 6 or any time the following month to experience this extraordinary event. This year's concert will also allow the Chelsea District Library to honor the generous donations made in loving memory of Robert M. German. Join us in celebrating this wonderful man!

4 QUESTIONS FOR SCULPTOR

Kenneth M. Thompson

When did you know you were an artist?

Occasionally. Even though I've been attempting to make art for nearly 50 years, I'm not certain that I'm always an artist. Often, there is a great deal of minutia to wade through that has nothing to do with being an artist. Like the rigors of running a business, navigating bureaucracies, dealing with clients, vendors and employees, securing materials, keeping a facility running, etc. Most of what I do in a day has very little to do with being an artist.

I've been known to sum-up projects as: "A half hour of creativity and a year and a half of work!"

What is the biggest roadblock you faced to becoming an artist?

For the most part, society has no respect for artists or their artwork! My father clearly represented this attitude for many, many years. It wasn't until I created my first war memorial in 1999 that he saw the value in what I do. It was because I finally made something that he, being a veteran, could relate to and appreciate.

Steel Spiral at the Kingsley Condos in Ann Arbor.

What inspires your work?

Many things. Often for public commissions, it's an assignment like the Centennial Arch for Siena Heights University made to celebrate and honor 100 years. Other times it's architecture or materials or people or a quote or our environment…sometimes it's just there.

Do you make a living from your art, or do you have a day job? If you have a day job, what is it?

Yes, I've been fortunate enough to make a living from my art for about forty-five years.

But, I've also had some day jobs…I call them 'real jobs.' I have taught motorcycle safety, basic math, statistical process control and instrument reading for Lenawee Vo-Tech, as well as sculpture for the University of Toledo.

Centennial Arch at Siena Heights in Adrian.

Kenneth Thompson owns Flatlanders Sculpture Supply and Art Galleries in Blissfield. Visit him online and learn more.

The Crazy Wisdom weekly Calendar

Early Childhood Classes, birth to age 5

Baby, Toddler, Preschool Class Registration • June 8 • 8 a.m. First Steps, Early Childhood Division of Rec and Ed Ann Arbor. will be hosting summer classes online for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their adults. Everything from music, dance, and movement to literacy, science, and language. First Steps successfully transitioned to an online platform in April, and we look forward to another virtual season of making social connections with small groups of families and enthusiastic teachers. Classes begin mid-June and run 4-6 weeks. For more information contact firststeps@aaps.k12.mi.us or browns@aaps.k12.mi.us. Register online here.

Virtual Meditation, Yoga, and Martial Arts

Zazen - Japanese Zen Meditation online with Taikodo Marta Dabis • June 7 • 11 a.m. • Meditate with a group of Zen practitioners from the comfort of your own home. Instructions available prior to the sitting by request. Noon service and informal check-in after the 40 min sitting. Zoom link via phone or computer. For more information contact Marta Dabis at jissojizen@gmail.com.

Meaningful Monday Gathering with SevaLight Retreat Centre for Self-Realization, Pure Meditation, Healing & Counseling • June 8 • 7:55 p.m. • We warmly welcome everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices, and traditions, to join us virtually on Monday evenings. We will gather on video conference at 7:55 to start at 8 pm, sharing in song~chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer for as long as you wish (away from our devices). These are such beautiful times with many blessings, please feel free to tell others so that they too may have the opportunity to link in by video and receive. Please email by 10 am any Monday to receive the information about how to join by video. No charge.

Artwork by Ani Daher. See more on her Instagram page.

COMFORT FOOD

Pam's Lasagne

By Angelas Madaras from her birth mom's recipe

Ingredients:

For meat filling:
1/2 pound ground sausage
1/2 pound ground beef
3/4 cup chopped onion
minced garlic clove
1 Tbsp. fresh chopped parsely
1/2 Tbsp. each of basil and oregano

For cheese filling:
1/2 cup cottage cheese
1/2 cup ricotta cheese
1 egg
1/4 cup parmesan cheese

The rest of the equation:
2 cans crescent dinner rolls
slicedor shredded mozzarella cheese
1 Tbsp. milk
1 Tbsp. sesame seeds

In a large skillet brown meat and drain. Add remaining meat filling ingredients. Simmer for five minutes.

Combine the cheese filling ingredients and set aside.

Unroll the can of dinner rolls. Lay it out on a baking sheet. Press the seams together so it is one big piece. Spread half of the meat filling down the center, leaving a one inch gap from the edge of the dough. Pour cheese filling on top, then add the remaining meat filling on top of the cheese layer.

Lay the slices of mozzarella, or sprinkle shredded mozzerella, on top of the meat filling.

Open the second can of rolls and lay it over the top. Again, pinching the seam shut. Pinch the top and bottom dough together to form an enclosed loaf.

Brush the top with milk and shake sesame seeds over the top.

Bake in oven set at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

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facebook.com/earthelementsmi

The Crazy Wisdom staff has missed seeing and interacting with many of you during our period of quarantine and we wondered what you were up to—so we asked!!

Callan Loo is the founder and executive director of The Intentional Living Collective, a nonprofit company that provides resources and programs for learning, growth, inspiration, and hope to the community, and facilitates collaboration between organizations and individuals.

We've been under stay-at-home orders for more weeks than I'd like to count. How have you changed or pivoted your business to stay relevant?

Yep, these have been strange times and I think we're all looking forward to finding some kind of "new normal" that doesn't include being sheltered in place! As the covid crisis ramped up it forced the team at The Intentional Living Collective to look hard at what we do and how we do it—and it even caused us to look deep into the mirror and ask if we should keep doing it at all. As a small, community-based nonprofit it can be a real challenge to secure sufficient, sustainable operating funds during normal times, and the uncertainties and fears in the current financial scene made that feel overwhelming on top of everything else going on in our own personal lives. We did for just a moment consider pulling back and waiting out the storm, but inspiration sometimes comes from unexpected places—including this little saying that sits on my kitchen windowsill: Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain. (Vivian Greene)

At our core we're a community-building nonprofit that was formed exactly for the purpose of giving people hope, inspiration, resources, and real connections during times of big life change or crisis, and it became clear as day to us that we've collectively become a community in crisis, so we knew we needed to step up and shine a bright light of hope. First, we had to decide what to do about our annual Rising Phoenix Awards—a community program that celebrates everyday people that rise from the ashes of big life changes and challenges to do awesome work in the community and then give hope and inspiration to others through their personal stories. It was scheduled for March and we decided to postpone it to late summer rather than cancel it, and rather than wait for the event we decided to post the video-based stories of all twenty-one new Rising Phoenixes on our site here so people could find hope and inspiration during these challenging times. Next, we got a commitment from one of our long-term donors to continue sponsoring us with enough funds to keep the literal and figurative lights on for a few months. Then, something even more awesome happened—a group of seven people stepped forward and offered up their time and energy as part of a "Community Leadership" team to help restructure our program offerings so they could effectively shine that light of hope and give people a place to turn to for inspiration and resources while sheltered in place. We launched a survey to find out what community members wanted and needed most and then we set to work changing our existing programs and creating new ones to meet the stated top needs—and you can see the results on our updated website. I'm so very thankful to Mara, Leah, Kellyn, Laura, Alexis, and Elisa for leaning in during challenging times! As I see it these new ways of serving the community are stepping stones along the path to a new normal that will be better and more sustainable than the way we used to do it, and we plan to keep building and refining from here.

What daily habit have you acquired during quarantine that you'd like to continue?

From a business perspective, I've shifted my daily meeting schedule to video conferencing and it's something I plan to continue to some degree even as the stay-at-home order is lifted. I own and run three small businesses and my normal schedule used to include quite a bit of travel for meetings and events. Being sheltered in place gave me the opportunity to really look hard at whether or not it was all really necessary, and I'm finding that it isn't. I find personal joy in connecting with people in person, so even though I'm a self-professed techie I've been resistant to having video or phone calls when I could reasonably sit down and chat over a cup of tea. After really jumping in with regular video sessions I've found I can get a

lot of that personal connection even if we're in different cities, states, or even countries.

On the personal side, the one big daily habit I've picked up is consistently getting enough sleep. Sounds like a small thing, right? It isn't! I've known for a long time how many hours of sleep I need nightly, but I allowed my schedule to get so busy that I regularly missed the mark, and now that I feel how good it is to get the right amount of sleep I intend to keep doing that moving forward.

What have you witnessed in others that leads you to believe we will come out of this time better than when we went in?

I heard through the survey I mentioned earlier that many people really want to do something more meaningful with their time and energy, and the past couple of months have given people a "pause in the action" in which they've been able to reconsider how they've been living their lives. As the stay at home orders are lifted, many people, whether by choice or not, will have the opportunity to do something different and whether or not they end up doing something more meaningful is a very personal thing that'll be determined by the actions they do or don't take. Some people will fall into a place of fear and despair and get stuck as they struggle to find whatever is next for them. Some people will go right back to straight-up trading their time and energy for things like money, healthcare benefits, stock options, and the like. I've been there, I know how powerful the need and want for those things can be. Some people, however, will recognize that the "security" those things seem to bring is illusory and fleeting and take the really hard step of letting them go for something more deeply meaningful. At a higher level, our society will change for the better as more and more people "wake up" and choose to do more meaningful things that serve others and connect us all as a healthy, thriving community that embraces love and abundance rather than fear and lack. What really gives me hope about this is that I've seen people doing exactly that through the Rising Phoenix Awards and the Community Leadership efforts and that inspires me to keep investing in The Intentional Living Collective to give those people hope, inspiration, resources, and real community connections to keep going when it gets tough and to create new opportunities for people to plug into.

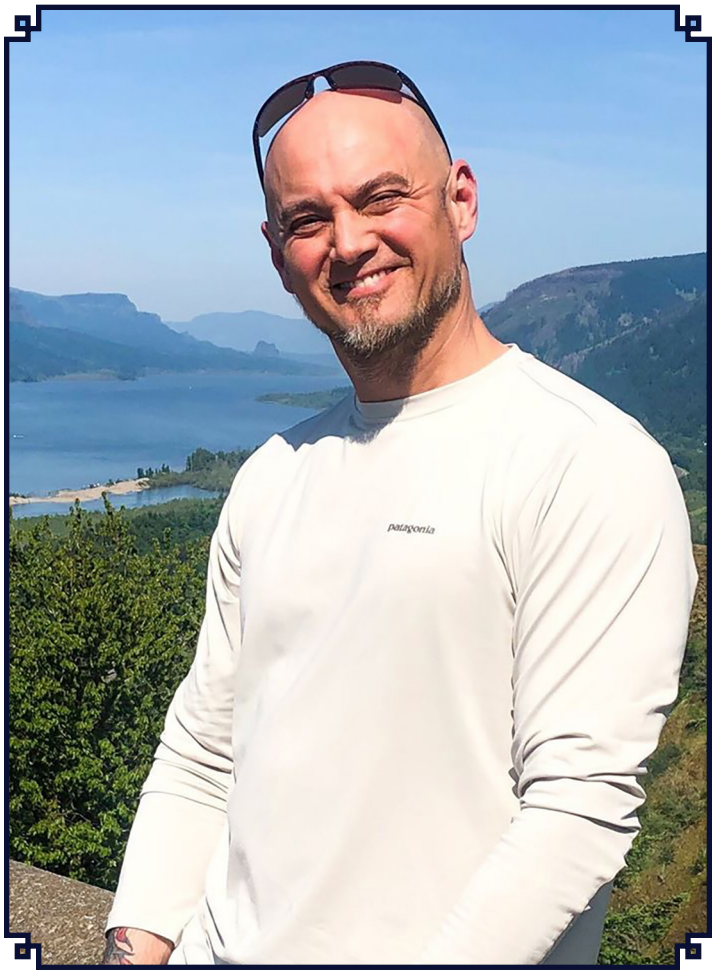
What is the first thing you want to do that you haven't been able to do in quarantine?

I want to go fly fishing! Getting out into nature, breathing the fresh air, feeling the breeze on my face, hearing the whispers of the river gliding by, tying on a fly, and letting my mind go blank as I slip into the calm, meditative place that fly fishing can bring is something I miss very badly. Whether I catch (and release) a trout or steelhead or not, the very process brings me joy and peace and the covid crisis kept me off my favorite rivers during the peak times of this year.

What guilty pleasure did you indulge in while staying home?

My most guilty pleasure? Okay, at the risk of sounding like a total geek I'll admit that I spent many, many hours over the past couple months reorganizing my massive comic book collection from the '80s and '90s and entering the whole collection into a collector's database. Back then I really enjoyed collecting and reading them but as my life got more serious I stashed them all in neat boxes with hopes of getting back to them one day—which didn't happen because there was just no way to make them a higher priority than my family, my friends, my community, my health, and my businesses. After decades of carrying those boxes with me as I moved around the country, I, for the first time, know what I have and how much they're worth. The guilty part? I actually got some of them out and made time to read those fantastic old stories rather than doing something more productive—like work.

Wrapping this up, the COVID-19 crisis we're all in right now—combined with the financial crisis and the justified unrest over racial inequities and violence—is most definitely life changing and it has the potential to affect us for the rest of our lives. How it affects us, and how we choose to respond during these times of uncertainty and change, is a personal decision we all get to make. Many of the systems and institutions around us are breaking down in front of our eyes and things may very well get worse before they get better, and that's largely out of our control. My take is that a lot of these systems are broken beyond repair anyway, and the only way something better can arise is for them to fall by the wayside—and for us all to decide to let go of the old ways of being and embrace meaningful roles as caring, contributing members of healthy, interdependent communities.



Callan Loo lives in Ann Arbor and has two grown children, Taryn and Jaden. Connect with him on Facebook or by email at caltaja@gmail.com.